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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

<u>Senate</u>

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... CR
- Executive Sessions ... ES
- Public Hearings ... PH

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... Appt (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

(ab = Assembly Bill)

(ar = Assembly Resolution)

(ajr = Assembly Joint Resolution)

(sb = Senate Bill)

(**sr** = Senate Resolution)

(sjr = Senate Joint Resolution)

Miscellaneous ... Misc

Record of Committee Proceedings

Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform

Senate Bill 396

Relating to: the deadline and procedure for voter registration and the determination of residency for voting purposes.

By Senators Reynolds, Grothman, Stepp and Ellis; cosponsored by Representatives Jeskewitz, Pridemore, Nischke, Nass, Albers, Kerkman, Lothian, Kleefisch, F. Lasee, Bies, Ainsworth, McCormick, Suder, Gundrum, Strachota and Gunderson.

October 19, 2005

Referred to Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform.

October 27, 2005

PUBLIC HEARING HELD

(1)

Present:

(4) Senators Reynolds, Lazich, Hansen and Carpenter.

Absent:

Senator Kanavas.

Appearances For

- Tom Reynolds, State Capitol Senator
- Sue Jeskewitz, State Capitol Representative

Appearances Against

- Andrea Kaminski, Madison League of Women Voters of WI
- Alicia Boehme, Madison WI Coalition for Advocacy
- Meagen Mahaffey, Madison WI Citizen Action
- Erik Guenther, Madison State Bar of WI--Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section
- Brian Tanner, Madison United Council of UW Students

Appearances for Information Only

Kevin Kennedy, Madison — State Elections Board

Registrations For

None.

Registrations Against

- Jack O'Meara, Madison WEAC
- Steven Porter, Madison ACLU of Wisconsin
- Beau Stafford, Madison United Council
- Dan Rossmiller, Madison State Bar of WI--Individual Rights and Responsibilities
- Shirley Haidinger, Madison
- Joe Parisi, State Capitol Representative
- Gestina Sewell, Madison Associated Students of Madison
- Lena Taylor, Milwaukee Senator, 4th Senate District

- Anne Sayers, Madison WI League of Conservation Voters
- Joanne Ricca, Milwaukee WI State AFL-CIO
- Beverly Speer, Madison WI Democracy Campaign

November 2, 2005 EXECUTIVE SESSION - POLLING

Moved by Senator Reynolds, seconded by Senator Lazich that **Senate Bill 396** be recommended for passage.

Ayes:

(2) Senators Reynolds and Lazich.

Noes:

(3) Senators Kanavas, Hansen and Carpenter.

PASSAGE NOT RECOMMENDED, Ayes 2, Noes 3

May 4, 2006

Failed to pass pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution 1.

Patrick Henneger Committee Clerk

Please	return your	vote via ba	allot to S	Senator	Reynol	lds' off	ice (30)6 Sou	th) by <u>5</u>	5:00 p.n
Wedr	esday, Nove	mber 2 rd 20	<u>005.</u>							
Thanl	you.									
<u>MOT</u>	<u>ION</u>									
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Aye _		Nay _								
MOT	ON									
Recor serve	nmend confi for a term en	rmation of ding May	Timoth 1, 2008.	y Swee	ney as	a mem	ber of	the Au	ctionee	er Board
Aye _		Nay								
MOT:	<u>on</u>									
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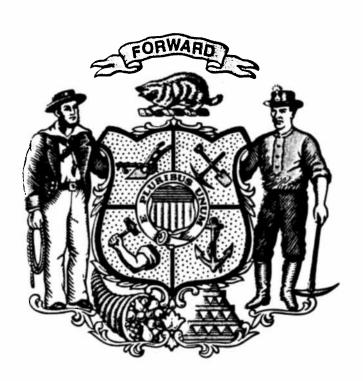
Requesting the Elections Board to modify Clearinghouse Rule 05-061 to address the concerns expressed in the Statutory Authority comments in the Legislative Council Clearinghouse Report on the Rule.

If the Elections Board does not provide a written response agreeing to consider such modifications to the committee clerk for the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform by Friday, November 4th, 2005, the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform objects to Clearinghouse Rural 05-061 on the grounds that the rule lacks statutory authority. (Attached is a copy of CR 05-061 and the Clearinghouse Report to Agency).

Aye	Nay

Signature

Distributed 11-2-05, 11 AM



Paper Ballot: Senator Hansen

Deadline: Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005, 5:00 p.m.
Please return your vote via ballot to Senator Reynolds' office (306 South) by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005.
Thank you.
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Byron Krueger as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2007.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Timothy Sweeney as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2008.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend passage Senate Bill 396 relating to the deadline and procedure for voter registration and the determination of residency for voting purposes.
Aye Nay

Requesting the Elections Board to modify **Clearinghouse Rule 05-061** to address the concerns expressed in the Statutory Authority comments in the Legislative Council Clearinghouse Report on the Rule.

If the Elections Board does not provide a written response agreeing to consider such modifications to the committee clerk for the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform by Friday, November 4th, 2005, the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform objects to Clearinghouse Rural 05-061 on the grounds that the rule lacks statutory authority. (Attached is a copy of CR 05-061 and the Clearinghouse Report to Agency).

		\/	
Aye	Nay	X	

Signature

Distributed 11-2-05, 11 AM



Paper Ballot: Senator Kanavas

Deadline: Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005, 5:00 p.m.
Please return your vote via ballot to Senator Reynolds' office (306 South) by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005.
Thank you.
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Byron Krueger as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2007.
Aye Nay
<u>MOTION</u>
Recommend confirmation of Timothy Sweeney as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2008.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend passage Senate Bill 396 relating to the deadline and procedure for voter registration and the determination of residency for voting purposes.
Aye NayX

Requesting the Elections Board to modify **Clearinghouse Rule 05-061** to address the concerns expressed in the Statutory Authority comments in the Legislative Council Clearinghouse Report on the Rule.

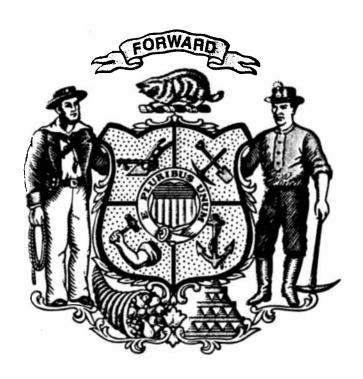
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Aye	<u>X</u>	Nay	
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Signature

Distributed 11-2-05, 11 AM

Thursday Devenus



Paper Ballot: Senator Lazich Deadline: Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005, 5:00 p.m.
Please return your vote via ballot to Senator Reynolds' office (306 South) by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005.
Thank you.
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Byron Krueger as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2007.
Aye Nay
<u>MOTION</u>
Recommend confirmation of Timothy Sweeney as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2008.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend passage Senate Bill 396 relating to the deadline and procedure for voter registration and the determination of residency for voting purposes.
Aye Nay

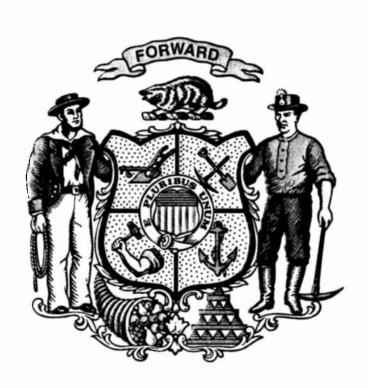
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\checkmark	
Aye	Nay

Signature

Distributed 11-2-05, 11 AM



Paper Ballot: Senator Reynolds Deadline: Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005, 5:00 p.m.
Please return your vote via ballot to Senator Reynolds' office (306 South) by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 2 rd 2005.
Thank you.
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Byron Krueger as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2007.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend confirmation of Timothy Sweeney as a member of the Auctioneer Board, to serve for a term ending May 1, 2008.
Aye Nay
MOTION
Recommend passage Senate Bill 396 relating to the deadline and procedure for voter registration and the determination of residency for voting purposes.
Aye Nay

Requesting the Elections Board to modify Clearinghouse Rule 05-061 to address the concerns expressed in the Statutory Authority comments in the Legislative Council Clearinghouse Report on the Rule.

If the Elections Board does not provide a written response agreeing to consider such modifications to the committee clerk for the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform by Friday, November 4th, 2005, the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform objects to Clearinghouse Rural 05-061 on the grounds that the rule lacks statutory authority. (Attached is a copy of CR 05-061 and the Clearinghouse Report to Agency).

Aye	Nay

Signature

Distributed 11-2-05, 11 AM





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS* OF WISCONSIN

122 State Street, #405 Madison, WI 53703-2500 Phone: (608) 256-0827 Fax: (608) 256-1761

http://www.lwvwi.org lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org

October 27, 2005

TO: Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform

RE: Statement about Senate Bill 396

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin strongly opposes Senate Bill 396, which would restrict voting by eliminating the possibility for citizens to register at the polls on Election Day. Based on our long-standing principle that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote, we support legislative measures that improve accessibility and ease of voting for all eligible citizens. We oppose legislation that restricts voting, particularly if it places an unfair burden on certain groups of citizens.

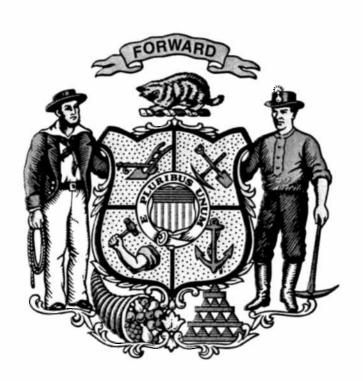
The League's support of free and fair elections goes back to our founding in 1920. We supported the 1977-78 legislature's enactment of major election law reform, including the establishment of registration at the polls. We are proud of our state's successful election procedures and high voter participation. We will continue to fight to protect citizens' rights to participate in government including the constitutional right of all citizens to vote.

Currently, an elector who appears at a polling place and who claims to be registered to vote in the election but whose name does not appear on the registration list may vote by signing a statement to the effect that he or she is a qualified elector of the ward or municipality served by the polling place and that he or she is registered to vote in the election. The elector must also present acceptable proof of residence or have another elector of the same ward or municipality, sign a statement corroborating the elector's statement. The corroborating elector must then present acceptable proof of residence.

This bill requires that in-person registrations and registrations by mail be delivered or postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on the 14th day preceding the election. The bill discontinues the procedure for registration on election day and the procedure under which an elector whose name does not appear on the registration list may be permitted to vote. This bill does permit an elector who changes his or her name, or who moves to a new residence within the same ward or municipality, to update his or her registration at the proper polling place or other designated location on election day.

SB 396 changes current law in two important respects. It eliminates same day registration – in fact, cuts it off two weeks before the election – and it eliminates the procedure by which pre-registered voters not on the registration list can vote. The bill, for example, would exclude from voting anyone who moves to Wisconsin within two weeks of election day. It would exclude citizens unable to take the time from their busy work and family lives to register ahead of time. It would exclude citizens who are not aware of the requirements. It would result in less citizen participation in our elections.

To improve our election process, the League has long believed we should focus on positive reform measures, rather than enact legislation that disenfranchises voters. We heartily support efforts to put more poll workers at the polls on Election Day and provide better training for poll workers and election officials in order to implement Wisconsin's present admirable provisions for voter registration.



Individual Rights & Responsibilities Section

State Bar of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Lawyers. Expert Advisers. Serving You.

MEMORANDUM

To:

Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Election Process Reform

From:

Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section

Date:

October 27, 2005

Re:

Senate Bill 396 -- OPPOSE

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is Erik Guenther and I am a Madison attorney whose practice focuses on criminal defense and constitutional law. I am here today representing the Individual Rights and Responsibilities (IRR) Section, which opposes Senate Bill 396.

The Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section brings together roughly 200 attorneys from around the State whose practices involve civil liberties and constitutional rights. As I indicated, the Section is opposed to Senate Bill 396. The State Bar as a whole has not taken a position one way or another on the Bill.

The Section opposes Senate Bill 396 in its present form because of its negative impact on Wisconsin citizens' right to vote and Wisconsin citizens' right to equal protection under the law. Our state has a long history of being one of the most voter friendly states in the nation. Wisconsin has allowed same-day registration since 1976 and this history of broad access to the polls ought be respected and continued.

The Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section believes that in a democracy, legislation addressing voting rights and procedures should focus on encouraging voters to participate in elections and to exercise their right to express their preferences about candidates and important ballot questions. Ideally, our voting system, supported as it is by the tax dollars of voters and non-voters alike, should focus on encouraging, if not increasing voter turnout, and not on limiting access to the polls or placing additional hurdles before voters. Excluding citizens who have not registered 14 days before an election is an unnecessary barrier that does not improve the efficiency or fairness of elections. Elected officials should work to increase, and not hamper, democracy.

The history of voting rights in the United State is a history of expansion of the right to vote. Wisconsin's adoption of same day registration is an important piece of our Country's expansion of the right to vote.

Article II of the United States Constitution provided a framework for voting in 1787. As we know, that framework originally provided access to the polls for only white, male landowners.

In 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state in the Union and our constitution adopted the most liberal voting laws in the Country. It allowed aliens in Wisconsin to vote if they had lived here for one year and declared their intent to become citizens.

In 1866, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted, protecting the right to 21-year old male residents to vote. Three years later, the 15th Amendment was adopted, granting all males the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

In 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified (after being introduced 42 years earlier), finally granting women the right to vote.

In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was signed which reiterated the rights granted under the 15th Amendment, but went further by protecting blacks and minorities from any other state-supported obstacles, such as literacy tests and complicated ballot boxes, that could keep them from voting.

Then in 1971, the 26th Amendment was ratified, lower the voting age in all elections to 18. Five years later, Wisconsin broadened the protections to voters by creating same day registration, eliminating obstacles for voting which disproportionately effect lower-income residents, the disabled, the elderly and new or undecided voters.

The current system of same day registration helps to assure that our citizens with mobility issues and disabilities, the elderly and those residents of lower income have the same ability to choose their government representatives as other Wisconsinites. Requiring early registration would also foreclose access to the polls for citizens who did not decide to vote until the last several days before an election. Such equal access to the polls is at the heart of the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection and America's history of expanding access to the polls to disenfranchised groups.

Same day registration is a significant factor in Wisconsin having one of the highest rates of voter turnout in the country. Wisconsin had the second-highest rate of voter turnout for the last Presidential election, with an impressive 76.6% of citizens exercising their right to vote. Of the five states with the highest voter turnout in the November 2004 presidential election, four have same day voter registration. Further during the time period from 1996 - 2000, the six states which allow same-day registration had an increase in voter turnout which more than doubled the average increase throughout the country. See Committee for the Study of the American Electorate.

Any action by elected officials, lawmakers who have been put in place by the voters, to circumvent voters access to the polls ought be suspect. Absent a clear and compelling reason, the legislature should not act to make it more difficult for everyone in the state to vote. This is

particularly true given the documented difficulties the State Elections Board has had in developing a statewide voter list.

The Individual Rights and Responsibilities Section believes that many of the problems that have been cited as the rationale for eliminating same day registration could be addressed by focusing more attention on keeping the voter rolls up to date. The tools already exist to criminally charge and prosecute those who commit vote fraud (for example, by voting more than once) or for felons who vote. Those tools have not been fully utilized because the voter lists have not been kept updated as they should be.

Senate Bill 396 already provides for certain persons who change their registration to be able to cast a marked, provisional ballot. There is no apparent reason why this procedure could not be used with all persons who seek to register or change their registration at the polling place on election day. Adopting such an approach and requiring the voter to execute an affidavit would preserve access to the polls by same day registration without forcing Wisconsin to take a step backward in terms of limiting voter rights.

For those reasons, the IRR Section opposes Senate Bill 396 in its present form and urges that Senate Bill 396 should not move forward without documented studies demonstrating that the system of same day registration contributes to a documented and statistically significant problem at the polls or that a less restrictive approach could not be used to solve such problems.

If you have any questions, please contact Dan Rossmiller, Public Affairs Director for the State Bar of Wisconsin, at (608) 250-6140 or drossmiller@wisbar.org.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

14 W. Mifflin Street, Suite 212, Madison, WI 53703-2568 Phone (608) 263-3422 Fax (608) 265-4070

Testimony on SB 396
Labor and Election Process Reform Committee
October 27, 2005
By Brian Tanner
Legislative Affairs Director, United Council of UW Students

Chairman Reynolds and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address an alarming piece of legislation. As the Legislative Affairs Director for the United Council of UW Students, I am here representing over 140,000 students on 24 University of Wisconsin campuses across our state. There are three points I encourage you to consider as students urge you to vote against SB 396 which would eliminate Election Day voter registration.

One, students are a highly transient population. In many ways they are forced to live a nomadic lifestyle. I offer the following anecdotal evidence which many of you may be able to relate to. Over 36,000 students live in residence halls across the state. Tens of thousands of other students live in off-campus housing, in most cases as renters of property. Each and every year students pack up their worldly possessions, sometimes all of which may fit into a car, and move into their rooms or apartments usually the weekend before the start of classes and move out after spring exams. This is not by their choice but forced by UW policy and renter contracts.

Two, being a part of the electoral process is a retention tool for our communities. We need more college degree holders in our communities to attract high-wage jobs and to build a sustainable tax base. Voting is one of the easiest means to invest students in the community. What are we saying to students by erecting additional voting barriers, "visit but don't stay?"

Last, voting is a fundamental democratic right. Our state should be reducing barriers, not creating more, for citizens to participate in our democracy. Our elected officials did exactly this in establishing Election Day registration for residents here in 1976. Wisconsin is one of six states that offer same-day voter registration and we should be proud of this. We should be proud that our youngest voting citizens, those 18 to 24 years old, had the second highest voter turnout in the country at 63 percent (Center on Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement-CIRCLE). Studies have shown young citizens vote 14 percent higher in states with Election Day registration during Presidential election years and 4 percent higher in mid-term elections.

Studies have also shown that voting is a "learn behavior." Once someone votes for the first time, the more likely they are to vote again. However, as one gets older and has not voted, they are less and less likely to vote.

(continued)



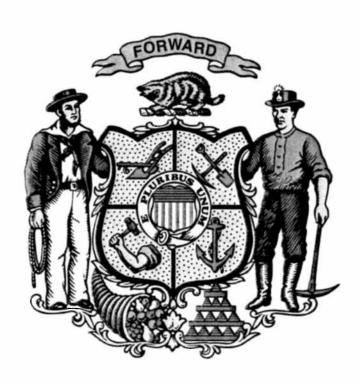
United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

14 W. Mifflin Street, Suite 212, Madison, WI 53703-2568 Phone (608) 263-3422 Fax (608) 265-4070

Students are the future leaders of our state, possibly our nation. We should make every effort to engage them in the electoral process at every opportunity. Evidence clearly shows that Election Day registration engages students. Students urge you to vote against SB 396.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



THE PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

1

October 27, 2005

To:

Senator Reynolds, chairperson, and members of the Committee on Labor and

Election Process Reform

From:

Alicia Sidman, Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy

Subject: Senate Bill 396

The Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy is the Protection and Advocacy agency for the state of Wisconsin. Our mandate is to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Wisconsin.

We have serious concerns that SB 396 will discourage people with disabilities and other eligible voters from participating in the electoral process.

People in Wisconsin appreciate the ability to register to vote on election day. This is demonstrated by the fact that approximately 20 percent of voters utilized this option during the November 2004 presidential elections. It is also true that last November Wisconsin had one of the highest voter turn outs in the country. We should be proud.

Given its popularity, it is no surprise that people with disabilities utilize same day registration as well. As the voting rights coordinator for our agency, I make myself available to answer questions for people with disabilities on voting laws. I received many calls from eligible voters with disabilities on election day last November who wanted to know if they could vote even though they had never voted before and were not registered. Wisconsin's same day registration election law permitted these eligible voters to register and cast a ballot.

Repealing same day registration would discourage eligible voters from voting. As it is, voters with disabilities face barriers that make it more difficult for them to cast a ballot than for others. These barriers can include not being able to cast a private and independent ballot, not being able to enter their polling site because the building is not accessible, being turned away from the polls because they do not "appear" to be eligible to vote, and lack of accessible transportation to the polls. The effects of these barriers are reflected in the statistics; individuals with disabilities vote at a rate of 15 percent below the general population.

Barriers to voting affect all voters, but barriers disproportionately impact voters with disabilities.

SB 396 would increase the number of provisional ballots cast in Wisconsin. The means of proving a provisional ballot should count is significantly more difficult for people with disabilities compared to the general population. This is because people with disabilities must often rely on special transportation that requires at least 24-hour notice to ride. A voter who casts a provisional ballot is required to prove they are eligible to cast a ballot by 4:00 PM the day after the election. Because of the time requirement to secure a ride, it would be impossible for some voters with disabilities to provide proof to the municipal clerk by the next day.

Currently our same day registration law exempts Wisconsin from the National Voter Registration Act (aka the motor voter law). Because SB 396 eliminates same day registration, Wisconsin law will need to change to comply with the motor voter law. This law requires public assistance offices and agencies that serve people with disabilities and who are primarily funded by the state to register to people to vote. This will help some people with disabilities to register to vote. However, there are many eligible voters with disabilities who are not connected to these agencies and who could be adversely affected by the elimination of same day registration. Therefore, the damage that would be caused SB396 is not outweighed by any benefit of compliance with the National Voter Registration Act.

Furthermore, Wisconsin does not need to eliminate same day registration in order to pass a law to require social service agencies and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to register people to vote. Proactive state legislation could mandate agencies to register people to vote without eliminating same day registration.

The county and municipal clerks I have spoken to feel that the vast majority of problems they experienced last November happened because proper procedures were not followed and there was lack of administrative planning for the high voter turnout. In part, there were not enough poll workers who were properly trained to deal with the high voter turn out. Numerous administrative errors were made, and there was not enough people power to process all of the mail-in registration forms. The clerks believe these problems, and not rampant fraud, were the reasons for election day problems.

There are plans in place that will help clerks to manage voter registration and that are designed to limit fraud. HAVA requires that the state implement a voter registration database; is due to be up and running in the next few months. Municipal clerks have been working on streamlining and enforcing their election day policies and procedures so they are prepared for record voter turnouts. Also, legislation has been introduced that will solve these problems without placing the burden of responsibility on the voter.

SB 396 will make it more difficult for people with disabilities to vote and will have the consequence of disenfranchising the disability community and others from the electoral process. We do not support SB 396, and believe that alternative solutions should be pursued that do not discourage people from voting.